

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01477 221431Z
ACTION AID-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 AF-04 EB-04 /030 W
-----078112 221437Z /50

O 220953Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2273
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH
AMEMBASSY MBABANE POUCH

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FOR AA/AFR BUTCHER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID LT WZ BC
SUBJ: PROPOSED REALIGNMENT IN BLS COUNTRIES

REF: STATE 124868 (NOTAL)

1. I CONCUR FULLY IN THE NECESSITY OF DECENTRALIZING MANAGEMENT OF USAID PROGRAMS IN BLS COUNTRIES BY CREATING INDEPENDENT COUNTRY MISSIONS. THIS MOVE NOT ONLY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT DIFFICULTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES OUTLINED REFTEL PARA 2, IT RECOGNIZES DISPARITIES AMONG BLS COUNTRIES AND NEED TO BRING PROGRAM BENEFITS MORE DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE. TO ASSURE ORDERLY TRANSITION, I HOPE DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES CAN BEGIN WITHIN EXISTING FRAMEWORK BY INCREASINGLY DEFERRING ON PROGRAM MATTERS TO THE JUDGMENT OF COUNTRY OFFICERS AND MISSION OFFICIALS.

2. AS REFLECTED IN RECENT MESSAGES FROM ALL THREE CAPITALS ON POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL, THERE ARE CONSTRAINTS TO RAPID EXPANSION. THE LOGISTICAL CONCERNS (NOTED REFTEL
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PARA 5.B) HAVE ALREADY DISCOURAGED ESTABLISHMENT OF SEVERAL PROPOSED USG ACTIVITIES IN THE THREE SMALL PROVINCIAL CAPITALS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE OTHER BROAD CONSTRAINTS STEMMING FROM (A) POLITICAL/SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS, (B) TENSIONS WITH HOST COUNTRIES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES (E.G., REFUGEES, HUMAN RIGHTS), AND (C) CONCERN ABOUT DISPROPORTION BETWEEN SIZE OF USAID PRESENCE AND SIZE OF PROGRAM IN SWAZILAND. (AS A RESULT,

FOR EXAMPLE, WE WOULD EXPECT TO REVIEW POSSIBILITIES OF REPROGRAMMING SOME EXISTING OSARAC SLOTS, WHICH ARE PRINCIPALLY GEARED TO COUNTRY NEEDS, BEFORE ESTABLISHING NEW REGIONAL ONES.)

3. DESPITE THESE CONSTRAINTS WE HAVE NOW REACHED A LEVEL OF 31 US DIRECT HIRE AND 140 US CONTRACT EMPLOYEES IN THE THREE COUNTRIES, I.E., AVERAGING MORE THAN 10 USDH PER COUNTRY. THE BASIC CRITERIA APPLIED DURING THIS PROCESS RELATE TO PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND THE CLEAR MANDATE TO KEEP "PERSONNEL OF ALL AGENCIES..AT MINIMUM NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES" (PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER OF LAST OCTOBER 25). REQUESTS FOR STAFF INCREASES WOULD BE EVALUATED ON THE BASIS OF THESE CRITERIA, ESPECIALLY FIRM PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, AND AFTER WEIGHING CONSTRAINTS TO ASSURE THAT WE WOULD NOT IMPAIR OVER-ALL RELATIONSHIPS OR ENDANGER OUR STATUS OR PRESENCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GABOR001477
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780215-0571
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780534/aaaabcqw.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f0c38a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 124868
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2619617
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED REALIGNMENT IN BLS COUNTRIES
TAGS: EAID, LT, WZ, BC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f0c38a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014